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TO A WHEAT FIELD

By RUTH LECHLITNER

When all the boasted beauties of a day
Reluctant grow, and little charms forget,—
When thorn and vine and rose and violet
Are empty words that lightly drift away,
Or wear a catalogued complacency;
When star-glow, mist, and moonlight faintly set
Their fragile voices to a chansonette
That floats above the dim earth mournfully,

I shall to rich and golden strength aspire
Out where the burning sun and bright grain meet,
Where billowing sweeps a silken copper fire,
And fragrances of musk are strangely sweet;
There swells the music of a world's desire:
The slow, proud, rippling prelude of the wheat!

TWO SONNETS

By MARVIN LUTER HILL

HAUNTED

Because I could not ever forget you quite
But kept you in a corner of my brain
From whence you would slip out sometimes at night
To walk about my house of life again
Making the very foundation shake with pain,
I will throw wide the portals and invite
You to go in and out upon your light
Musical feet — an inmate to remain

Until at last the pillars may not quail
At your approach, nor the remembering door
Moan on its hinges, or the accustomed floor
Shrink from your footfall, — or else it prove too frail
For interminable assault and fall some day —
A thin, white dust the winds will blow away.

THE PERFECT HOUR

The perfect hour went winging, like a bird,
Between the dark and light; and low and sweet
Came the faint music that had once been heard
On lips that now would never more repeat
Its wonder; until presently it stirred
Lightly as lily shadows on a pool,
And in our minds the evanescent, cool,
Awakened thrill of a forgotten word.

Then silence smothering as dusky shrouds
Of water in the dark when wild hands tear
Intangible veils, and the dead air
Thickens about us like impenetrable clouds —
A moment only, then it gleamed afar
Leaving the silver tracing of a star.

RECKONING

By BELLE TURNBULL

HERS

There yet remains the evening of this day. . . .

Far off the clamor of the hurrying train
Roars up against the canyon and away,

Leaving me void and effortless and slain.

There yet remains the mountain and the moon,

Too surely poised, too splendidly austere:
They do not care that all my senses swoon —

My veins run white — because of you, my dear.

I wish that like some little furry beast,
That yearns and mates and straight is whole again,
I might stand free of memory and, released,

Be spared this sick unrest, this after-pain —

What am I saying? I will pay — will pay —
Oh, gladly! — for the morning of this day!

HIS

Noon on the shuttling, many-clanking street:

Hot breath of asphalt where the pavements glare;

Foul breath of jockeying autos everywhere . . .

What is that sudden whiff, pervasive, sweet —

Stinging my jaded pulses' slogging beat —

Of juniper and balsam on the air?

Close to the curbing shrinks a rancher's mare,
Drawing a load of pine that fries with heat. . . .

I could forget my manhood; I could lean

My head upon that wretched cart and cry

For that brown girl I loved among the clean

Crushed balsam boughs, whose fragrance, hot and dry,
Filled earth and heaven and all that lay between —

Pine-breath will be her incense till I die!

TWO SONNETS

By CHARLES BROWN NELSON

TRYST

The ashen moon has sketched my wall with beams
In shadowed semblance there of you I know
May come no more. A wind is sighing low
To bid me turn, nor heed the heart that seems
To find reality in wistful gleams
As cold and fragile as a flake of snow. . . .
How mad to love you, when I cannot go
Behind the curtains on my stage of dreams!

Your lips! They tremble when I breathe your name,
And through the silver mists I see you smile —
Why, Time has only added to your charms,
And Death has left your dimples just the same!
But only let me watch you for a while. . . .
I fear to come and take you in my arms.

FALL PLOWING

A lonely blot against the fading sky,
He walks behind his horses, on and on
Across the field to cheat a frozen dawn.
Above the restless wind I hear a cry
Of slowly wheeling birds that pass him by
Above the sod. Another day! and gone
Like shadow to eternal shadow drawn. . . .
Tomorrow . . . and tomorrow . . . and we die.

“I love you,” did I whisper by his side
One summer night a thousand Junes ago?
“I love you”? — Ah, the years are cruel things.
They steal away the spirit and the pride
In life itself, and having made us so,
They fold us, knowing little, in their wings.

SONNETS FOR IRMA

By STANLEY BURNSHAW

LONELY WORSHIPPER

She walked within a deep humility,—
A shadow made of quietness and fears
Of what earth held, and love, and what were tears —
A mist of silence and uncertainty;
And though her face beheld by men might be
A shrine to love, — too high for praise or sneers,
She sought more lonely treasures in the years,
That others scorned; and loved them quietly.

They never thought that in her silence burned
A secret deeper than the others knew,
A love more poignant than the others learned, —
For they had never seen her in the dew,
Nor watched her dark eyes as they rose to find
The moon come ringing, ringing down the wind.

SCEPTIC

Let those who know for certain that the sea
Is moon-reined water, that the beach is sand
And heaven is a windy canopy
Dangling above the rain-worn face of land, —
Let those whose minds are firm and sure, command
Our dreams to die if that would make us free;
Let them prepare us; make us understand;
Blow light across our eyes and make us see!

We shall remember what they say of night
And Spring and storm; but some still words will pass
Within us when we walk beneath the sky:
Storm is a wild hill running mad with fright;
Spring is a golden fire in the grass;
Night is a stream of dark wind moving by.

TWO SONNETS

By MARLOW A. SHAW

I

With hope, always with hope, I've watched for you.
The grass is coming on the upland brown,
As last spring early when we two rode down,
And I alone returned — a bugle blew.
Now galling tears fall fast, my heart is rue;
And sound of music's in the little town,
Where people throng in gladness, lay their crown
Of welcome on your men, the veterans few —

But you, my you, in Château Thierry dead!
It helps not that they speak of noble way,
That to high bravery your name is wed, —
The garden path is empty of your feet,
Your face I'll never in the doorway greet,
And lonely is the come and go of day.

II

O'er earth the quiet of some hidden dell,
And haze, and trees afame, and tawny corn
(The third rich autumn since my soul was torn),
Was e'er for passing year a fitter knell?
And from this patient, mystic color-spell,
From quiet beauty hardly to be borne,
Comes voice, I know not how, to my heart lorn,
That with all dying things it fareth well.

And know I, too, dear heart, in glory sleeping,
There in far France, forever sanctified,
That much I wrunged you in that bitter weeping,
You and the many chosen there who died. —
O Earth, and is your beauty but fulfilled,
By man in action for a high cause killed.

MOTHER AND SON

By HAROLD LEWIS COOK

How long she trod the circle Life had drawn,
How long had ceased to dream what lay without
The door of circumstance that held in pawn
Those years of hers when she had come to doubt
There was release from toil, an hour apart —
How long it was, she realized that day
She failed to know what beauty stirred his heart,
What silence bound him till he could not say
The name of his sweet torture. Sick with shame,
He, knowing now that his first bridge was burned,
And she, uncertain how to stay the flame,
They parted; he, still wild and sullen, turned,
Dream-hunting, to the world, and she to sit
Till twilight come and she be part of it.

OUR CONTRIBUTORS

STANLEY BURNSHAW was born in New York, and now makes his home in Pittsburgh. His poems have appeared in *Voices*, *The Lyric*, and *Contemporary Verse*.

HAROLD LEWIS COOK is an instructor in Northwestern University whose poems have been widely published. THE MIDLAND printed his sonnet, "The Theft," in its number for April 15, 1925.

MARVIN LUTER HILL's home is in El Paso. She was born in Kentucky and educated in private schools. Her poems have appeared in *Voices*, *The Century*, *The Smart Set* before its fall, and other periodicals.

RUTH LECHLITNER is known to the readers of THE MIDLAND through her poems in the August number.

CHARLES BROWN NELSON was introduced to our readers in a group of poems published May 15th of this year.

MARLOW A. SHAW will be remembered by MIDLAND readers as the author of a number of contributions in verse and prose. His sonnets in this issue are reprinted from an earlier number because of a misfortune that one of them suffered at that time in going through the press.

BELLE TURNBULL, of Colorado Springs, has published verse in many periodicals, including *Poetry*, *Poet Lore*, *Voices*, *The Measure*.

BRIEF REVIEW

Paul Bunyan. By JAMES STEVENS. (Knopf, \$2.50.) These chapters are "tall tales" from the American lumber camps of the north and west. I doubt, however, if the word *tall* is tall enough. These are the biggest lies thus far in American literature. The Bunyan yarns are in the same class with the *Narrative of Baron Münchhausen*, the *Travels of Sir John Mandeville*, the *Gargantua* of Rabelais, the *True Travels* of Captain John Smith — though they differ in one way or another from each and all of these. They have somewhat the flavor of northern myth, and the black duck dinner at Bunyan's camp reminds a little of Thrym's banquet in the *Poetic Edda*.

Everything here is on a tremendous scale. There is the fight between Bunyan and Hels Helsen on top of the inverted mountain: "Around and around the one hundred and twenty-seven mile circle of the lofty plain the leader and the foreman fought with all their powers. Now came a sound like a thunder-clap as Paul Bunyan smote Hels Helsen solidly on his square jaw. Now came a sound like a hurricane screeching through a network of cables as Hels Helsen's hand seized Paul Bunyan's beard and was jerked loose. For a long time the struggle seemed equal, with neither combatant suffering great injury. Then Paul Bunyan's shoulders struck acres of pine trees with the crash of a tornado. A heaving mass of dust rolled over him, but the dauntless leader's head was suddenly thrust above it; the loggers saw his fist fly from behind him, it squashed over Hels Helsen's nose, and the sun shone red through a spray of blood. Balloons and geysers of dust now rose explosively all over the mountain top, and heavy gray clouds soon hid the mountain from view; trees and rocks crashed everywhere on the plain below; the convulsions of the earth increased in force; even the bravest of the loggers were at last terrified by the shocks and blasts, and they fled to camp and hid under their blankets."

It must be admitted that the game gets tiresome after a while; all the most tremendous similes taken from the works of nature have been used up. But the collection and recension of these folklorish tales was very much worth doing.

As a postscript I may note that these tales are evidently related to the Eel River stories from West Virginia logging camps that Mrs. Margaret Prescott Montague published two years ago in the *Atlantic Monthly* to the delight of many readers.

F. L. M.

